

DATE 3/23/2011

FB SB132

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**FRANCES MAHON
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Fax

To: Chair + Members of Health + Human Service Committee.
From: Sharlene Schmidt, Audiologist
Fax: 406-444-4875 Pages: 3 (including face sheet)
Phone: Date: 3-22-2011.
Re: SB132

☐ Urgent ☒ For Review ☐ Please Comment ☐ Please Reply ☐ Please Recycle

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- ① Facesheet.
- ② Short letter.
- ③ Initial letter with more details.

Your understanding of this issue is
very important ~ Thank you for serving
such a critical role.

Sincerely, Audiologist
Sharlene Schmidt
Glasgow, Montana.

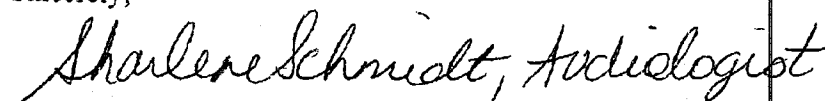
March 22, 2011

Dear Mr. Furey – Committee Member of Health and Human Service:

This is another letter in support of SB132. Please support the repeal of an unnecessary duplicate licensing requirement for audiologists.

Audiologists are well trained in hearing aids and should not be required to hold an additional license as a hearing aid dispenser. If you want more information about this please read the additional page included in this fax transmittal.

Sincerely,



Sharlene Schmidt, MSA

115 Heather Lane

Glasgow, MT 59230

Cell phone contact is: 406-263-0247

FMDH Hospital Audiologist

Montana Speech Language Hearing Association – Current Treasurer

Montana Audiology Guild – Past President

March 8, 2011

Representative Howard - Chairman of Health and Human Service:

My name is Sharlene Schmidt and I am requesting your support for SB132. I have been a practicing audiologist in Montana since my arrival to the state in June of 1999. The education of an audiologist is an important question for the purpose of this bill. An audiologist has a four year undergraduate degree and a two year master's level degree in most cases. There is a significant amount of the training dedicated to fitting of hearing aids for both the pediatric and adult populations. Following this training, I received four months of supervised full time training in a clinical setting and in a private practice environment. Currently, in order to become an audiologist an AUD program is required which would entail even more education and supervised training. **Audiologists are not undereducated in the process of fitting hearing aids.**

Currently in the state, an audiologist pays to be licensed as an audiologist (\$100.00) and also pays to be licensed as a hearing aid dispenser (\$650.00). An audiologist is well trained in the fitting of hearing aids and should not have to pay an additional fee to be identified as a hearing aid dispenser. This is the main basis for introduction of SB132.

This bill would not change the hearing aid dispensers' access to fit hearing aids in the state of Montana. Audiologists simply want to be recognized independently as audiologists.

It should also be mentioned that if audiologists are licensed only as audiologists and not hearing aid dispensers, **continuing education is still an important requirement for maintaining the license.** As licensed audiologists, we are required to have 40 continuing education units by February 1st of each odd-numbered year.

I thank you for your time and consideration for SB132. Please support this worthwhile bill.

Sincerely,



Sharlene Schmidt, MSA
115 Heather Lane
Glasgow, MT 59230
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